

HOMOSEXUALITY IN PAULINE THEOLOGY AND ITS  
IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICAN CHRISTIANS

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## ABSTRACT

This study, "Homosexuality in Pauline Theology and its Implication for African Christians" probe into Paul's thought on homosexuality in the early New Testament church and brought out the implications it poses for African Christians in the light of modern scholarship and the demand for the legalization of homosexuality within the African churches and states. This was done with the view to examine whether in the light of contemporary re-interpretation of Pauline passages on homosexuality, it can still be maintained that Paul like any other Biblical writer prohibits homosexuality as a sin which is contrary to God's revealed pattern of sexuality. The methodology used includes tracing the historical and cultural background of Pauline passages that deals with homosexuality particularly Romans 1:24-27. Also, an analysis of the New Testament documents and exegetical literatures such as commentaries, dictionaries, and articles in relevant journals and encyclopaedias as well as internet materials were explored.

Though, some modern biblical scholars has sought to re-interpret Pauline passages as not prohibiting homosexuality, the findings in this works show that a contextual and exegetical examination of Romans 1:24-27 reveals that attempts by some contemporary writers to do away with Paul's prohibitions against present-day same-sex relations are false. Paul did not impose Jewish customs and rules on his readers as suppose by some scholars; instead he addressed same-sex relations from the trans-cultural perspective of God's created order. God's punishment for sin is rooted in a sinful reversal of the created order. Nor was homosexuality simply a sin practiced by idolaters in Paul's day; it was a distorting consequence of the fall of the human race in the Garden of Eden. Hence, Paul wrote that homosexual activity was an exchange of the created order (heterosexuality) for a perversion (homosexuality), which is never presented in Scripture as an acceptable norm for sexuality. Summarily, this work shows that the unambiguous rejection of same sex intercourse and marraiges that one finds in Pauline passages and the entire Bible as a whole remains in force for the church and the African Christians will do well to uphold this truth of the scripture not minding the mesmerizing pressure from the homosexual adherents and protagonists. Having gone through this work, it is therefore recommended that the African church must engage in comprehensive and comprehensible teaching of Biblical truth on homosexuality. The African Christian leaders must not sweep the issue of homosexuality under the carpet as something not existing in the African society. Bible studies, seminars and symposiums where topics that deal with homosexuality in the light of Biblical revalation as shown in Romans 1:24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 must be organised frequently to set forth clear biblical doctrine that homosexuality is a sin for the African christians.

homosexuality is corruption of human sexuality, an exchange of God's revealed truth about human sexuality into a lie. In fact, Paul's view of homosexuality is entirely prohibitive and condemnatory. It is a sin on the same pedestal with idolatry.

Furthermore, this work also demonstrated in detail the sociological and biological concept of homosexuality. In addition, effort was made to trace the traditional concept of homosexuality in Africa as well as the current trend in Africa states. Implications were then from the deduction from Pauline passage condemning homosexuality for the Africa Christians. The implication were noted to concern both the individual, family, church, and society. Finally on the ground of Biblical deduction as seen in Pauline passages, health issues and sexual morality, same sex intercourse and marriages cannot be regarded as a light or relatively harmless sin. The clear implication, is that the unambiguous rejection of same sex intercourse and marriages that one finds in Pauline passages and the entire Bible as a whole remains in force for the church and the African Christians will do well to uphold this truth of the scripture not minding the mesmerizing pressure from the homosexual adherents and protagonists.

## 5.2. CONCLUSION

Drawing from the discussion in the preceding chapters, one eminent fact from Pauline theology is that homosexuality is condemnable and contrary to God's intention for human sexual relationship and this position is valid for African Christians notwithstanding the barrages of arguments, experiments and sentiments advanced by homosexual protagonist as discussed in this work. Thus from all that has been discussed in this work, at least three facts become so lucid and they are:

1. Same-sex intercourse and marriages is strongly and equivocally rejected in Pauline theology and by extension, the entire Biblical revelation. Arguments put forward by advocates of homosexuality to undermine the contemporary

relevance of scripture particularly the Pauline passages dealing with this matter are weak. Paul in his writing did not reject same sex intercourse because of some alleged ignorance of non-exploitative forms of homosexual behaviour or genetic causation factors as some pro-homosexual scholars argue. Rather, Paul rejects homosexuality because it is the violation of the gendered existence of male and female ordained by God at creation. Homosexual intercourse and marriages puts male in the category of females and females in the category of males, insofar as they relate to others as sexual beings and that distorts the sexuality intended by God for the health and the vitality of the human race.

2. Same -sex relationship represents a suppression of the visible evidence in nature regarding male-female anatomical and procreative complementarity. Complementarity extends also to a range of personality traits and predispositions that contribute to making heterosexual unions enormously more successful in terms of fidelity, endurance, and health than same-sex ones
3. Societal endorsement of homosexual behaviour will only accelerate the many negative social effects arising from such behaviours. Such negative effects include, an increase in serious health problems ( diseases including but not limited to HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and rectal cancer; substance abuse, mental illness, including depression and suicide attempts and hence a significant decrease in life expectancy), a significant erosion in ecclesiastical and societal expectations of long-term monogamous relationships and thus, a further cheapening of the institutions of marriage and family and the annihilation of all societal gender norms.

Therefore, the African Christians must hold firmly to the revealed truth of God as espoused in Pauline theology to insist on the condemnation of homosexuality and

since it has been seen in this work through a careful evaluation of the Pauline theology that homosexuality is a sinful practise, the African christian position must then be prohibitive and this must be made louder and clearer for all to hear.

### 5.3. RECOMMENDATION

Having probed into Pauline theology on homosexuality in this work, it is essential to make necessary recommendations for African christians in the light of the deductions of this work. Therefore, the following recommendations are proffer to African christians on the issue of homosexuality.

1. The African christian must be prepared to face the challenges raised by efforts of the pro-homosexual apologists in seeking to normalise homosexuality. Especially those who taken their stance from the scripture, arguing against the prohibitive perception in Paul's writings.
2. The African church must engage in comprehensive and comprehensible teaching of Biblical truth on homosexuality. The African Christian leaders must not sweep the issue of homosexuality under the carpet as something not existing in the African society. Bible studies, seminars and symposiums where topics that deal with homosexuality in the light of Biblical revelation as shown in Romans 1:24-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 must be organised frequently to set forth clear biblical doctrine that homosexuality is a sin for the African christians
3. The African church and christians must withdraw fellowship from any members of the church who publicly or secretly indulge in homosexuality, or sympathises with course of homosexuality, no matter his or her position in the church.
4. Sequel to the third recommendation above, the African christian and church must also be ready to show God's love for the people trapped in homosexual

lifestyle, they must be loved and ministered as the church seeks to call such ones to higher standard of behaviours

5. The African church must develop a robust restorative programme and ministry that can help repentant homosexuals and assimilate them again into the church life. This area should be looked into for further study.
6. The African christian must be on the fore-front of working toward a society that reject homosexuality in all its forms that is, African christians should work toward a society that neither promulgates or promotes laws favouring homosexuality. African christians should voice Biblical rejection of homosexuality using all public avenues and platforms.